



State Legislative Update for the Week of March 23 - 27, 2015

Monday, March 23, 2015

Senate Session

Bill introductions of veterans interest: None

House Session

Bill introductions of veterans interest: None

Committee Hearings

Committee: **House Veterans Affairs Division**

Chair: Rep. Bob Dettmer

Agenda:

HF 1942 (Pugh): Memorializing Congress and the President to provide funding to the Officers' Club building located at Fort Snelling and to provide additional funding to support the services the 934th Airlift Wing provides to officers, families, and civilians. This resolution memorializes Congress and the President of the United States to provide funding to maintain and restore the Officers' Club building located on the grounds of Fort Snelling and to support services provided at the Officers' Club. Fort Snelling is a National Historic Landmark and the Officers' Club provides a venue for military officers, military families, and civilians to socialize and find fellowship. The bill was moved, as amended, and re-referred to State Government Finance.

HF 146 (Dettmer): Honor and Remember Flag designated as an official symbol of the state's commitment to military service members who have lost their lives in service to our country, and display of flag encouraged on certain days in certain public locations. This bill designates the Honor and Remember Flag as the symbol for the state's concern and commitment to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty as members of the armed forces. It suggests days for displaying the flag, leaving the decision to the chief administrator of each governmental building or facility, but does not allow an employee to be required to report to work solely to display the flag. It also provides that any public office or public official may accept a donation of one or more Honor and Remember Flags to carry out the purposes of this section. Because the Honor and Remember Flag is protected by copyright, a manufacturer must obtain a license from the copyright holder to make the flag. Government buildings and facilities will only be able to display flags purchased from licensed manufacturers or from the owner of the copyright. A license

may be required to publish photographs that include the flag. The bill was moved and re-referred to State Government Finance.

HF 1420 (Metsa): Morrison County; solar photovoltaic module approval for a public utility solar project provided factors to be considered, and money appropriated. The bill directs the Public Utilities Commission to consider other factors, such as American production of solar panels, in their selection process for a solar modular farm at Camp Ripley. The bill was moved and re-referred to the Committee on Job Growth and Energy Affordability Policy and Finance.

Committee: **House Transportation Policy and Finance**

Chair: Rep. Tim Kelly

Agenda:

HF 243 (Newton): Driver's licenses and Minnesota identification cards Purple Heart designation established, and state park permits provided. This bill adds an optional Purple Heart designation on driver's licenses and Minnesota identification cards, and provides free daily state park permits to Purple Heart license or ID card holders. Requirements to receive the designation match existing requirements in place to obtain a special license plate for combat wounded military personnel (which also makes the designation available to active duty members of the military who have received a Purple Heart). The bill includes a delayed effective date to accommodate a new information technology system that the Department of Public Safety is currently developing. The committee report was adopted and re-referred to the Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee.

Committee: **House Legacy Funding Finance**

Chair: Rep. Dean Urdahl

Agenda:

HF 129 (Dettmer): Big Marine Lake veterans rest camp improvement funding provided, and money appropriated. This bill appropriates \$113,000 in FY2016 from the arts and cultural heritage fund for a grant to the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp Association for the veterans rest camp on Big Marine Lake to connect existing trails and to develop and build a children's recreation area. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the Omnibus Legacy bill.

HF 453 (Hancock): Veterans programs funding provided, and money appropriated. This bill appropriates \$100,000 in both FY 2016 and FY 2017 from the arts and cultural heritage fund to the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Humanities Center, a nonprofit organization that seeks "to build a thoughtful, literate, and engaged society" through public programs and community events. The board must use the funds for Veterans Voices Month events and other veterans programs. Veterans Voices is a program to recognize and honor the stories and contributions of Minnesota veterans. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the Omnibus Legacy bill.

Committee: **Senate State and Local Government**

Chair: Sen. Patricia Torres Ray

Agenda:

SF 1455 (Saxhaug): Veterans affairs commissioner guardianship program repealed. This bill repeals a section of statute that authorizes the district court to appoint the Commissioner of Veterans Affairs to be guardian of the estate of a veteran or a dependent when the court determines that guardianship is necessary. The bill was recommended to pass and moved to General Orders.

SF 1446 (Carlson, J.): Hire a Veteran month designation change. This bill changes the month designated as “Hire a Veteran Month” from May to July. The bill was recommended to pass and moved to General Orders.

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Committee Hearings

Committee: **House Health and Human Services Reform**

Chair: Rep. Tara Mack

Agenda:

HF 506 (Schoen): Temporary licensing provided for former and current members of the military. This bill provides a process for qualified current members—and their spouses—and former members of the military to receive expedited, temporary licenses in the following professions: licensed professional counseling (LPC), licensed professional clinical counseling (LPCC), and licensed alcohol and drug counseling (LADC). Additional licensed professions include optometrist, dietician and nutritionist, podiatrist and barber. The committee report was adopted and re-referred to the Civil Law and Data Practices Committee.

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

Senate Session

Bill introductions of veterans interest: None

House Session

Bill introductions of veterans interest: None

Committee Hearings

Committee: **House Property Tax and Local Government Finance Division**

Chair: Rep. Steve Drazkowski

Agenda:

HF 705 (Howe): Congressionally chartered veterans organization property provided reduced classification rate. This bill provides a class rate reduction from 1.5% to 1.0% for property of non-profit community service organizations that are owned or operated by congressionally chartered veterans’ organizations. The class rate reduction would expire after ten years. Qualifying organizations are the American Legion and the VFW. This reduction results in a slight increase in tax burdens to all other properties. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the Omnibus Tax bill.

Committee: **House Health and Human Services Finance**

Chair: Rep. Matt Dean

Agenda:

HF 1296 (Anderson): Stearns County provider grant for administrative funding to support a service provider serving veterans, and money appropriated. This bill appropriates \$85,000 in each year of the biennium to the Commissioner of Human Services for an administrative funding grant to Stearns County for a service provider serving veterans in Stearns County. The grant may be used to support a variety of services for veterans in Stearns County. It is a onetime appropriation. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the Omnibus Health and Human Services bill.

Committee: **Senate State and Local Government**

Chair: Sen. Patricia Torres Ray

Agenda:

SF 1828 (Reinert): Resolution memorializing Congress and the President of the United States to provide funding to maintain and restore the historic Fort Snelling Officers' Club building and to provide additional funding to support the valuable services of the 934th Airlift Wing at the club. This resolution memorializes Congress and the President of the United States to provide funding to maintain and restore the Officers' Club building located on the grounds of Fort Snelling and to support services provided at the Officers' Club. Fort Snelling is a National Historic Landmark and the Officers' Club provides a venue for military officers, military families, and civilians to socialize and find fellowship. The bill was recommended to pass and re-referred to the Rules and Administration Committee.

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Senate Session

Bill introductions of veterans interest: None

House Session

Bill introductions of veterans interest: None

It was moved that an invitation be extended to the Governor to present his State of the State message to a Joint Convention of the House of Representative and the Senate to be held in the House Chamber at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, April 9, 2015. The motion prevailed.

Committee Hearings

Committee: **House State Government Finance**

Chair: Rep. Sarah Anderson

Agenda:

HF 146 (Dettmer): Honor and Remember Flag designated as an official symbol of the state's commitment to military service members who have lost their lives in service to our country, and display of flag encouraged on certain days in certain public locations. The bill was moved and sent to the General Register.

HF 745 (Howe): Veterans preference procedures and rights modified. This bill authorizes a veteran who requests a hearing upon notice of termination to select the body that will hear the veteran's challenge to the termination. If the veteran does not select a hearing body, the decision belongs to the governmental subdivision. It also mandates that governmental subdivisions must pay the costs associated with the hearings, including the veteran's attorneys' fees, if the veteran prevails. This language extends veteran preference termination protections to teachers. The bill was moved and sent to the General Register.

**There will be no committee hearings the week of March 30 – April 6.
The Legislature will be in recess for a Passover/Easter break beginning
Saturday, March 28 through noon on Tuesday, April 7.**